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 CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
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 FOREIGN DOCUMENTS OR RADIO BROADCASTS

REPORT

CD NO.

STAT

COUNTRY Yugoslavia
 SUBJECT Military - Veterans' organizations
 HOW PUBLISHED Handbook
 WHERE PUBLISHED Belgrade
 DATE PUBLISHED Nov - Dec 1948
 LANGUAGE Serbian

DATE OF INFORMATION 1948DATE DIST. 17 Oct 1952NO. OF PAGES 6

SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT NO.

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SOURCE

Informativni prirucnik o Jugoslaviji, Book 1, Nov - Dec 1948.

THE ASSOCIATION OF DISABLED WAR VETERANS OF YUGOSLAVIA

The following report is one of several taken from Informativni prirucnik o Jugoslaviji, a handbook published irregularly since late 1948 by the Yugoslav Directorate for Information.

The Association of Disabled War Veterans of Yugoslavia (Savez ratnih vojnih invalida Jugoslavije) was established as the only Yugoslav organization of disabled war veterans at its First Congress, held on 28 - 29 October 1945 in Belgrade. The disabled veterans of previous wars and the disabled veterans of the National Liberation War were thus united into a single organization.

Disabled War Veterans in Prewar Yugoslavia

Prewar Yugoslavia paid scarcely any attention to the problems of disabled war veterans, not even attempting to improve conditions for disabled war veterans of World War I. Prewar regimes considered war veterans as social liabilities, and did not even think of attempting to solve their problems. Disability allowances were not fixed, but a type of subsidization was introduced which provided a scant number of disabled war veterans with some financial help, which was far below the minimum needed for existence.

Under such difficult circumstances, it was impossible to begin any action toward establishing a general organization that would include all disabled war veterans and war victims, although the need for such action was imperative. The authorities of prewar Yugoslavia finally permitted the establishment of the Association of Disabled War Veterans, but the organization existed only on paper and could not render any assistance to the country's numerous disabled war veterans. Key positions in the organization were held by groups of followers of the current regime who used their positions for their own personal interest and took no account of the difficulties facing disabled war veterans.

- 1 -

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Postwar Situation of Disabled War Veterans

The situation of disabled veterans and wounded changed completely during the National Liberation War because of the constant care of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, of the Supreme Command of the National Liberation Army, of the Partisan Detachments of Yugoslavia, and because of Tito's personal concern. One of the most brilliant pages in the history of the National Liberation War was written by the heroic efforts of the units of the National Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Yugoslavia during the Fourth and Fifth offensives of 1943. While fighting heavy battles for several months, on the express orders of the Supreme Command of the National Liberation Army, the Partisan Detachments of Yugoslavia, and Comrade Tito, these units saved thousands of seriously wounded, disabled, and sick fighters.

A large number of wounded were transported to the base of the National Liberation Army in Bari, Italy, where they were given medical aid and systematic treatment in hospitals.

In 1944, the National Liberation Committee of Yugoslavia issued a decree on the issuance of monthly aid to disabled war veterans and their families. They continued to receive this aid until new regulations went into force in 1947.

Between March and September 1946, the government of Yugoslavia, in cooperation with representatives of the Association of Disabled War Veterans of Yugoslavia, enacted the Law on Disabled War Veterans, the Regulation on Examination of Persons Protected by the Law on Disabled War Veterans, the Regulation on Treatment of Orthopedic Cases and Supply of Prosthetic Appliances, the Regulation on Proceedings of Commissions for Disabled, and the Directive on the Ascertainment of Disability.

In connection with the efforts of the state and the association to include in the economy as many disabled war veterans as possible, the federal Ministry of Finance issued a decree on 3 May 1946 which granted the association jurisdiction over the retail sale of tobacco, tobacco products, cigarette paper, and matches throughout Yugoslavia. The ministry also issued the regulation on the operation of the State Lottery. This grants the association the exclusive right to sell lottery tickets in Yugoslavia. Certain state economic enterprises were also handed over to the association.

Disabled war veterans are taken care of materially; they have been given extensive rights and benefits as regards medical care, recreation, schooling, education, and cultural development; possibilities have been created for their incorporation in the national economy, and for their participation in the struggle for socialism; and the association has extensive prospects of developing its activities.

Activities of the Association of Disabled War Veterans

The victory of the national liberation movement created extensive possibilities for achieving fully equal rights for disabled war veterans as regards social and economic security and participation in political, social, and cultural life in general.

After the First Congress, which approved the by-laws of the association and elected the Central Council, the association was very active in establishing organizations of disabled veterans throughout the country.

- 2 -

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STAT

At its First Plenum in March 1946, the Central Council clarified the problems of its organizations and selected representatives to work with the highest state authorities in preparing the Law on Disabled War Veterans and other legislation concerning disabled veterans.

The Second Plenum of the Central Council was held 29 September - 1 October 1946. The plenum decided to organize more extensive economic activity in disabled veterans' organizations as soon as possible. In the name of the entire membership, it obligated itself to assume, by the end of 1950, the responsibility of making all payments due disabled war veterans, payments formerly made from the state budget. It changed the name of the organization to Union of Disabled War Veterans of Yugoslavia (URVIJ, Udruzenje ratnih vojnih invalida FNRJ), and the name of the Central Council was changed to Main Council of the URVIJ (Glavni Odbor URVIJ). The plenum also made a number of decisions in connection with taking over certain economic enterprises from the state, and with the sale of monopoly articles. The problem of ideological, political, cultural, and educational activities in organizations of disabled war veterans was also discussed.

The third Plenum of the Main Council was held from 3 to 6 August 1947, and the Fourth Plenum from 4 to 6 July 1948. The latter meeting followed a number of successes achieved by the organization in many sectors, especially the economic sector. This meeting decided to hold the Second Congress of the organization in Belgrade in October 1948. It was unanimously decided to dismiss for the organization the former vice-president of the Main Council, Andrija Hebrang, because of his work against the people.

The Second Congress of the organization was held in Belgrade, 18 - 19 October 1948. About 600 delegates representing all disabled war veterans' organizations in the country participated. On the basis of the report of the Main Council and the discussion that followed, the Second Congress established certain objectives. First and most important was the organization's participation in developing socialism in Yugoslavia. Next was the necessity for the closest cooperation with the party, the people's organizations, and the people's authorities in solving problems of disabled veterans. To attain these objectives as well as possible, the Second Congress pointed out the need for increased ideological and political activity among disabled veterans, especially in rural areas.

The Second Congress approved a new statute, changed the name of the organization back to Association of Disabled War Veterans (SRVIJ), and elected a Central Council.

The congress ruled that people's congresses should be held before 1 July 1949 to elect managements for the veterans' organizations in the individual republics.

- 3 -

RESTRICTED

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Members and Organizations

Immediately before the Second Congress, the Association of Disabled War Veterans had the following number of members:

<u>Republic</u>	<u>No of Individual Members</u>	<u>No of Relatives of Members</u>	<u>Total</u>
Serbia	35,061	124,939	160,000
Croatia	33,496	56,506	90,002
Bosnia-Herzegovina	11,248	26,997	38,245
Slovenia	7,000	20,000	27,000
Montenegro	2,251	6,977	9,228
Macedonia	1,385	3,568	4,953

The association has 319 srez, 17 city, 2,552 municipal, and 14 rayon councils. The activities of these councils are directed by two oblast, one provincial, and six republic councils. These in turn are responsible for their work to the Central Council.

Participation of Disabled War Veterans in the Economic Life of Yugoslavia

The Association of Disabled War Veterans has 237 production enterprises and 89 commercial enterprises.

The organization has a large network of hotel enterprises, which increased from 401 to 476 in 1948.

The organization has also taken over the wholesale and retail sale of tobacco, tobacco products, matches, postal stamps, and tax stamps. In srez centers, 38 purchasing warehouses belonging to the organization distribute tobacco to 4,352 sales stores.

In 1948, bookstores managed by the association increased from 46 to 206; 83 of these are in Croatia.

The operation of the State Lottery is under the management of the republic administrations for disabled war veterans, under the direct supervision of the Central Council of the association. Seven independent enterprises manage lottery operations. Of 75,000 lottery tickets put on sale in 1947, 63,724 or 84.96 percent were sold. The number of lottery tickets was increased by 25,000 in 1948, and the plan for sale of lottery tickets was fulfilled 100 percent.

The association is active in organizing farms in the villages; it had 24 model farms by October 1948.

In 1948, a total of 11,953 persons were employed in economic enterprises managed by the association. Of these, 3,769 were disabled war veterans, divided among the republics as follows: Serbia 1,950, Croatia 646, Slovenia 395, Bosnia-Herzegovina 335, Montenegro 180, and Macedonia 263.

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Training of Disabled War Veterans

The association has established an extensive program of courses to train disabled war veterans for work in the economy and in the state administration.

In 1947, the Central Council of the association and the main councils organized two courses in bookselling, and one course on books in general, which were attended and completed by 479 persons. In 1948, it organized 38 courses for 1,149 disabled war veterans.

In 1947, 20 technical and general management courses and one course in economics, attended by a total of 113 persons, were given under the management of the Central Council. In 1948, courses were given in motion-picture projection, bookselling, and bookkeeping, and a refresher course was given for instructors. These courses were completed by 154 persons.

In 1948, the Main Council of Disabled War Veterans of Serbia organized two commercial courses, one bookkeeping, one grocery-trade, and one library science course, attended by a total of 275 persons.

In 1947, the Main Council of Disabled War Veterans of Croatia organized three courses in general education ranking with Gymnasium courses, one administrative commercial course, and one course for photographers, attended by a total of 215 persons. In 1948, it organized five courses in general education ranking with Gymnasium courses, one administrative commercial course, and one course each for supervisors, hotel managers, photographers, and bookkeepers; these were attended by a total of 345 disabled veterans.

In 1948, the Main Council of Slovenia organized two administrative bookkeeping courses, attended by 49 disabled veterans; and two courses in elementary and advanced economics, attended by 60 disabled veterans.

In 1947, the Main Council of Bosnia-Herzegovina organized one bookkeeping course which 29 veterans attended. In 1948, it organized two courses for secretaries and one for managers of tobacco warehouses which 117 veterans completed.

In 1947, two courses were organized in Macedonia: one in administrative bookkeeping and one in painting, which 51 persons attended. In 1948, four courses were organized: a course for enterprise managers, an accounting course, a secondary course in general education, and a course in economics, which were attended by 90 disabled war veterans.

In 1947, the Main Council of Montenegro organized courses in agriculture, commerce, tailoring, economics, higher finance, bookkeeping, and bookselling, which were attended by 71 disabled war veterans. In 1948, the council organized courses in economic administration, statistics and records, warehousing, carpentry, tailoring, and two in bookkeeping, which were attended by 59 disabled war veterans.

The Second Congress ruled that the association's organizations pay special attention to the training and incorporation in the economy of seriously disabled war veterans. The organization has already succeeded in training blind veterans for work in basketwork enterprises, in carton making, and for the telephone service. For instance, 127 blind war veterans completed their training in the Center for the blind in Zemun and learned various handicrafts.

- 5 -

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Connections With Foreign Countries

In 1946, the Association of Disabled War Veterans established connections with organizations of disabled war veterans in the People's Democracies and with Italy. At the end of 1946, the Central Council of the association sent a representative to Albania to help establish an organization of disabled war veterans there. At the beginning of 1948, a delegation of the association visited Prague at the invitation of the Czechoslovak organization of disabled war veterans. An exchange of disabled war veterans with Czechoslovakia was accomplished in the same year; 15 Yugoslav veterans visited Karlovy Vary, and 15 Czechoslovak disabled veterans visited the Adriatic coast. At the end of 1947, representatives of the association attended the First Congress of the Bulgarian Disabled War Veterans in Sofia. During the same period, connections were established with the Greek organization of disabled war veterans.

In January 1948, the Central Council of the association proposed to hold in October 1948 an international conference of disabled war veterans' organizations from the People's Democracies and the USSR. Although the organizations from all the People's Democracies sent written agreements before the end of March 1948 and welcomed the Central Council's suggestion, the conference was not held because of the Cominform Resolution.

In June 1948, to strengthen connections with disabled war veterans' organizations in other democratic countries, the Central Council of the association established an international resort in Lopud at Dubrovnik. A large number of disabled war veterans from the People's Democracies visited it in 1948.

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- 6 -

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